

Cancer takes Gary Diebolt, an all-around car guy

Gary R. Diebolt lost his 10-year fight with cancer on Nov. 14, 2009. His last year was the worst but he continued with his work in town and at home anyway as he had jobs to finish. He was never one to leave anything undone so he left orders and notes for things to be done should he not finish them.

He was 65 years old, born in Kansas on a farm to Pauline and Carl Diebolt who preceded him in death. He worked the farm with his dad and brothers until high school, when they moved into town. His first vehicle was a tractor for his 12th birthday and then an old Ford on his 14th. He had an obsession for racecars and custom rods as he had both through the years starting as that teenager until the present. He orchestrated his first custom car show at the age of 17. His car was a black '57 Ford called "The Undertaker."

He graduated high school in Iola, Kan., and received an associate's degree in art from Allen County Junior College. He was a cheerleader throughout high school and junior college. He then joined the U.S. Air Force and was headed to officer's training but due to a back problem received a medical discharge. He then continued his education at Pittsburg State University in Pittsburg, Kan., where he completed his bachelor's degree in automotive technology.

Following graduation, he worked for Allis Chalmers as a troubleshooter, traveling all over the U.S., then transferred to Seattle and after a year took a position to work the Northwest territory for Subaru National, traveling to dealerships from Wyoming to Alaska for 25 years representing the company.

In 1975, Gary married Sue Wehmeyer and had a son, Travis

Jon Diebolt. They divorced in 1981. She preceded him in death in 1986.

Gary loved SCCA racing and was on their board for years and moved on to rally racing. He was active with Rainier Auto Sports Club from 1975, working as control crew to pace car to Nor'wester chair, and a regular on Alcan 5000 staff from 1985 helping with course surveys, always going on the winter trek from Bellevue to the Artic. Gary also raced in the Golden West 2000 and Rally International de las 24 Horas around 1980, and many SCCA and Cascade Auto Sports Club events in a Dodge Colt he helped build, and Gary crewed PRO rallies for Victory Driving Products, Safety Devices (UK teams at Reno), drove around the country for the Hanson Motors Volkswagen International Pro Rally Team. In 1984, he drove the layout for the One Lap of America for Brock Yates. The last race he was in was in February 2008, when he drove to the Arctic Circle and back. He drove on the frozen river to the Arctic Ocean to an island, taking the same road-frozen river as the Ice Truckers.

In 1982, Gary attended his 20-year class reunion, where he found his high school sweetheart, Marjorie Perez Wille, and they married in 1983 in Miami, Okla. She and her three boys moved to the Northwest to Tacoma to make their home with him. He raised all the boys as his own.

Gary worked in the Seattle area after being hired to help build up two failing dealerships, taking them from bankruptcy to being paid for and successful in less than two years each. After retiring from the auto industry, he and his wife started antique businesses and later nostalgia shops in Olympia.

In 1997, they moved their home and business to Seaside, Ore. Gary

and his wife built several businesses: Flashback (1997-2000), Windsor Hollow (1999-2001), Flashback Malt Shoppe (2000, sold in 2008), The Jewelry Box, The Man Store, and three major events: Muscle Beach Cruz, Wheels & Waves and BikeFest at Seaside.

Gary was on the Seaside City Council for the last three years and on the Seaside Downtown Development Association board for six years prior to that. He was very active serving on many committees, bringing television and magazine crews to town to the events, promoting Seaside from the time he moved here. He loved Seaside.

He leaves his wife, Marjorie; four sons, Travis Diebolt and Sarah McBride of Astoria, Ore., Shawn Wille and wife Michelle of Juneau, Alaska, Mark Wille and Suzy Poe of Seaside, and Timothy Wille and Misty Jones of Tumwater; 10 grandchildren, Maceo Diebolt of Astoria, Summer Wille of Juneau, Brad Adsit Wille of Portland, Ore., Brooke and Heather Wille of Olympia, Christian, Haylee, Bonnie and Tyler Wille of Tumwater, and Breanna Poe, Seaside; brothers Richard Diebolt and wife Carol of Denver, and Roger Diebolt and wife Helia of Austin, Texas; six nephews and nieces; and many aunts, uncles and cousins spread all over the country, many of whom are still in Kansas.

A memorial service for family and friends was held Nov. 19 at Our Lady of Victory in Seaside.

Thank you to all for your sentiments, visits and well wishes. We will all miss Gary dearly as there was no one like this man.

Donations may be made to the American Cancer Society in care of Hughes-Ransom Mortuaries, 220 N. Holladay Drive, Seaside, OR 97138-6832.